

Abstract. South Africa experienced accelerated political change after 1990. Authors, artists and cultural managers have been adapting to this political transformation, which also altered complex interrelated patterns in the field of cultural production. Book publishers, previously shielded to some degree by government spending from international trends in the industry, were compelled to adjust drastically when government expenditure on books dropped by more than 80% between 1996 and 1998. For most local publishers, the adjustment was urgent and necessary in order to survive. Simultaneously, they were exploring new freedoms and opportunities flowing from the transition, and also facilitating the gradual forging of new identities in the cultural and literary landscape. Some publishers are now less likely to be exclusively defined by language or a fixed cultural identity, and perhaps more so by their positioning within the structure of the publishing industry. This article documents some of the changes at one particular publishing house, NB Publishers.